Effect of National Agricultural Policy

†1563. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the implementation and results of the National Agricultural Policy announced in the year 2000 have not proved effective;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the average annual growth rate was only 1.6 per cent. in the Tenth Five Year Plan period as per the assessment of Central Statistical Organisation;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government wants to rejuvenate agriculture in the Eleventh Five Year Plan Period; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The National Agriculture Policy (NAP), 2000 aimed at a growth rate in excess of 4 per cent annum in the agriculture sector. However, due to successive natural calamities during the Tenth Plan Period. The average annual growth rate during the Tenth Plan was 2.5%.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A number of steps have been taken to rejuvenate the agriculture sector during the Eleventh five Yea. Plan Period to achieve an annual growth rate of about 4 per cent. These steps include reorientation of agriculture policy and approval of National Policy for Farmers, 2007, launching of two new schemes, namely, National Food Security Mission (NFSM) to improve production and productivity of foodgrains and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) with an objective to incentivise the states so as to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sector and to provide flexibility and autonomy to states in the process of planning and executing agriculture and allied sector schemes and to maximize the returns to the farmers in agriculture and allied sector. Besides, a number of initiatives, Plan Schemes and Programmes including the initiatives/programmes announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been taken/initiated to address the problems faced by the farmers and for development of agriculture sector.

Constitution of Farmers Debt Relief Commission

1564. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB PEEVEE:
SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute a farmers Debt Relief Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether Government is also considering to write off the debts of small and marginal farmers and bring down the interest on farm loans to a simple interest; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) There is no proposal with the Government of India for constitution of a Farmers Debt Relief Commission because the Government has taken several initiatives for providing debt relief to the farmers.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Details are given in the Statement.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Statement

Details of scheme of Debt Waiver and Debt Relief for farmers

A scheme of Debt Waiver and Debt Relief for farmers has been announced in the Union Budget 2008-09. The salient features of the proposed scheme are:

(i) All agricultural loans disbursed by scheduled commercial banks, regional rural banks and cooperative credit institutions up to March 31, 2007 and overdue as on December 31, 2007 will be covered under the scheme.

(ii) For marginal farmers (*i.e.* holding upto 1 hectare) and small farmers (1-2 hectare), there will be a complete waiver of all loans that were overdue on December 31, 2007 and which remained unpaid until February 29, 2008. In respect of other farmers, there will be a One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme for all loans that were overdue on December 31, 2007 and which remained unpaid until, February 29, 2008. Under the OTS, a rebate of 25 per cent will be given against payment of the balance of 75 per cent.

(iii) Agricultural loans which were restructured and rescheduled by banks in 2004 and 2006 through special packages and other loans rescheduled in the normal course as per RBI guidelines, will also be eligible either for a waiver or OTS on the same pattern.

(iv) The implementation of the debt waiver and debt relief scheme will be completed by June 30, 2008. Upon being granted debt waiver or signing an agreement for debt relief under the OTS, the farmer would be entitled to fresh agricultural loans from the banks in accordance with normal rules.

(v) It is estimated that about 3 crore small and marginal farmers and about 1 crore other farmers will be benefited under the proposed scheme. The total value of overdue loans being waived is estimated at Rs. 50,000 crore and the OTS relief on the overdue loans is estimated at Rs. 10,000 crore.

2. Considering that high rates of interest often act as a determnt to farmers from availing farm credit, it was announced in the Union Budget (2006-07), that crop loans upto Rs.3 lakh would be given at 7% rate of interest. Accordingly, crop loans are presently being made available at 7% at the ground level by almost all banks with interest subvention from the Government of India. This scheme is continued for 2007-08 and 2008-09 also.

Government efforts to meet shortage of wheat

†1565. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sowing area of wheat has reduced to about 70 lakh hectare this year as compared to last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith reasons therefor, State-wise;

(c) the names of districts which have been facing the shortage of fertilizers and good quality seeds and also those affected by the delayed crushing of sugarcane;

(d) the steps being taken by Government to meet the shortage of wheat; and

(e) the steps taken by Government to increase the production of rice, coarse grain and pulses?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.